Bruce Auerbach, Faculty Ombuds, is a Professor of Theatre with a specialty in design for the stage. In March, 2009 he was appointed to a three-year term as University Mediation Coordinator (UMC) then began serving as the University’s first Faculty Ombuds in Spring of 2012.

After nearly twenty-five years of serving in an administrative capacity, Bruce rejoined the faculty ranks and began searching for ways to become more involved as a “citizen of the University.” This search led to his role as UMC and formal training as an Organizational Ombuds. In 2009 he became a member of the International Ombudsman Association and went on to pass the Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner exam.

The highly collaborative nature of theatre, along with his service as an administrator and professor have created a unique and valuable background preparing him for work as an Ombuds. He is especially attracted to the numerous opportunities to help the faculty, administration and University as a whole.
PURPOSE OF THE FACULTY OMBUDS

Any organization has its share of complaints, differing perceptions, and alleged acts of impropriety or unfairness that require attention and resolution. Universities have traditionally addressed the need for resolution of conflict through a formal grievance process. As anyone who has participated in such a process knows, it is time-consuming and often emotionally wrought. Outcomes deemed unsatisfactory by complainants may proceed to grievances hearings, appeals and even lawsuits. To make the most of opportunities for informal resolution, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte has established a Faculty Ombuds Office.

The Faculty Ombuds serves as an alternate resource for conflict management, prevention and resolution. Our purpose is to provide an informal, impartial, independent, and to the extent allowable by law, confidential source of assistance to individual faculty or groups experiencing conflicts or who have complaints involving others at the University. We seek to educate the faculty, administration and greater University on matters relating to improving the culture of civility throughout our campus.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE OMBUDS

Independence
The Ombuds Office is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

Neutrality and Impartiality
The Ombuds, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombuds does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest.

Confidentiality
The Ombuds holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exceptions to this privilege of confidentiality are where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm, or if the Ombuds is otherwise required by law to disclose, report or testify. The privilege is held by the office and cannot be waived by others.

Informality
The Ombuds, as an informal resource, resists testifying in any formal proceeding, asserting the confidential nature of communications with the Ombuds Office.

SOME CONCERNS WE CAN HELP YOU WITH

- Relationship with your supervisor
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Workplace incivility
- University policies and procedures
- Academic disputes
- Bullying and harassment
- Equitable treatment
- Grievance procedures

THE OMBUDS ASSISTS FACULTY BY

- Listening to concerns
- Clarifying issues
- Explaining policies
- Reviewing procedures
- Articulating options
- Serving as a neutral party in resolving disputes
- Providing referrals to other resources
- Helping to pursue solutions
- Identifying trends of conflict
- Facilitating conversations
- Mediating disputes
- Engaging in shuttle diplomacy

SOME THINGS WE DON’T DO

- Receive formal notice of complaints on behalf of the University
- Render formal decisions
- Alter policy
- Offer legal advice
- Provide psychological counseling
- Serve as an advocate for individuals or groups
- Participate in any formal University grievance or hearing
- Circumvent administrative procedures

Faculty are not required to use the Ombuds Office for informal resolution of conflict, and do so voluntarily.